

# **Draft Environmental Assessment Ulm Pishkun Construction Projects**

**Ulm Pishkun State Park  
Ulm, Montana  
January 26, 2006**



***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***

# MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS

## MEPA/23-1-110 MCA CHECKLIST

**NOTE:** Another five pages of checklist and letters developed for 23-1-110 MCA by the Parks Division are not attached to this document. The Parks Division and each Regional Parks Manager has the 23-1-110 MCA information.

Following is the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks checklist for Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Environmental Assessments (EA's).

## MEPA/NEPA/23-1-110 MCA CHECKLIST

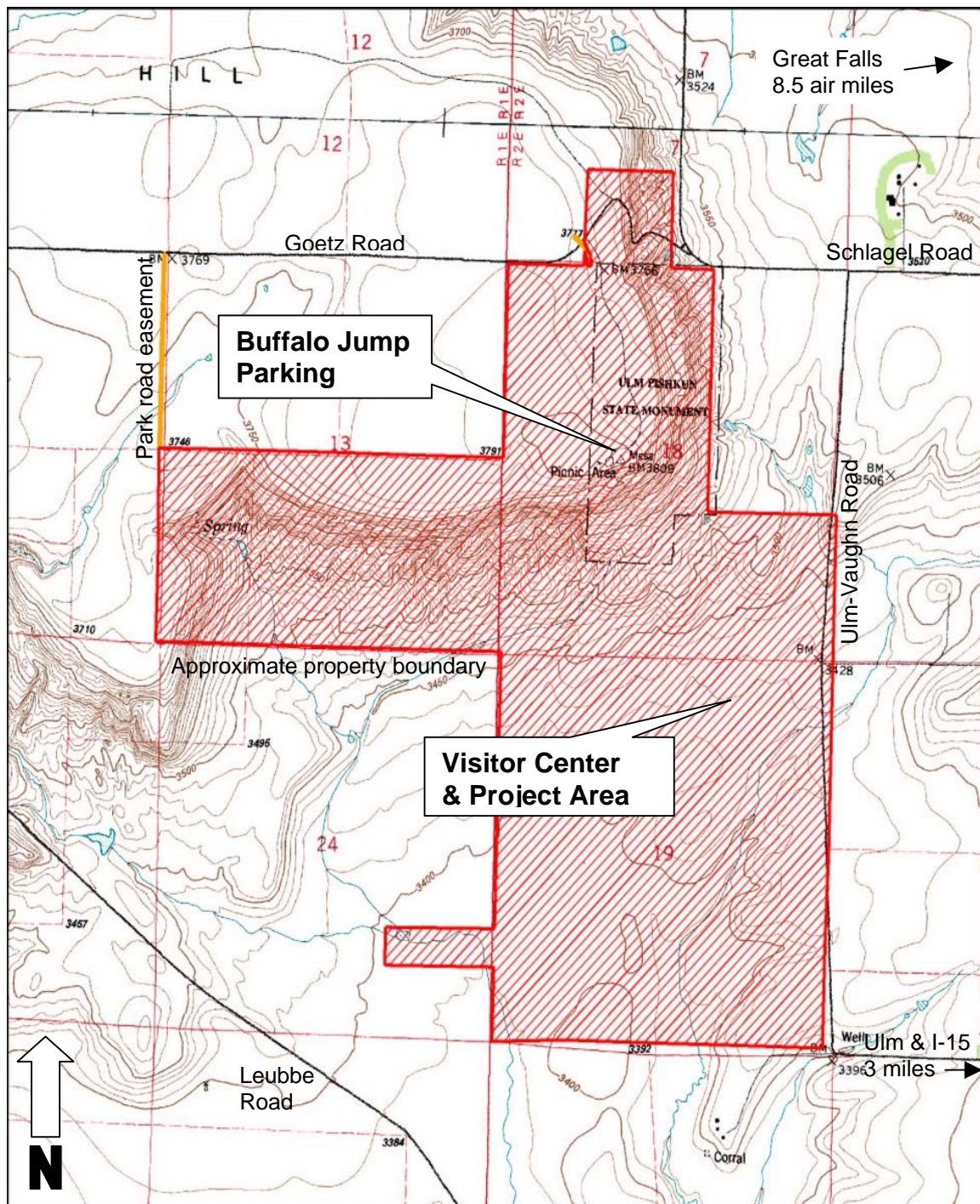
### **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

- 1. Type of Proposed State Action**  
The proposed State action would be taken at Ulm Pishkun State Park to construct a new maintenance garage and expand the existing visitor center parking area.
- 2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action**  
FWP has authority to provide development and access for public recreation. 23-2-101 MCA.
- 3. Name of Project**  
Ulm Pishkun Construction Projects.
- 4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls MT 59405
- 5. Estimated Construction/Commencement Date:** March 15 – April 1  
**Estimated Completion Date:** June 15 – July 1  
**Total Time of Construction:** 90 days  
**Current Status of Project Design (% complete):** 95%
- 6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**  
Cascade County, Montana  
Section 19, Range 02E, Township 20N  
(Latitude 47.488, Longitude -111.526)

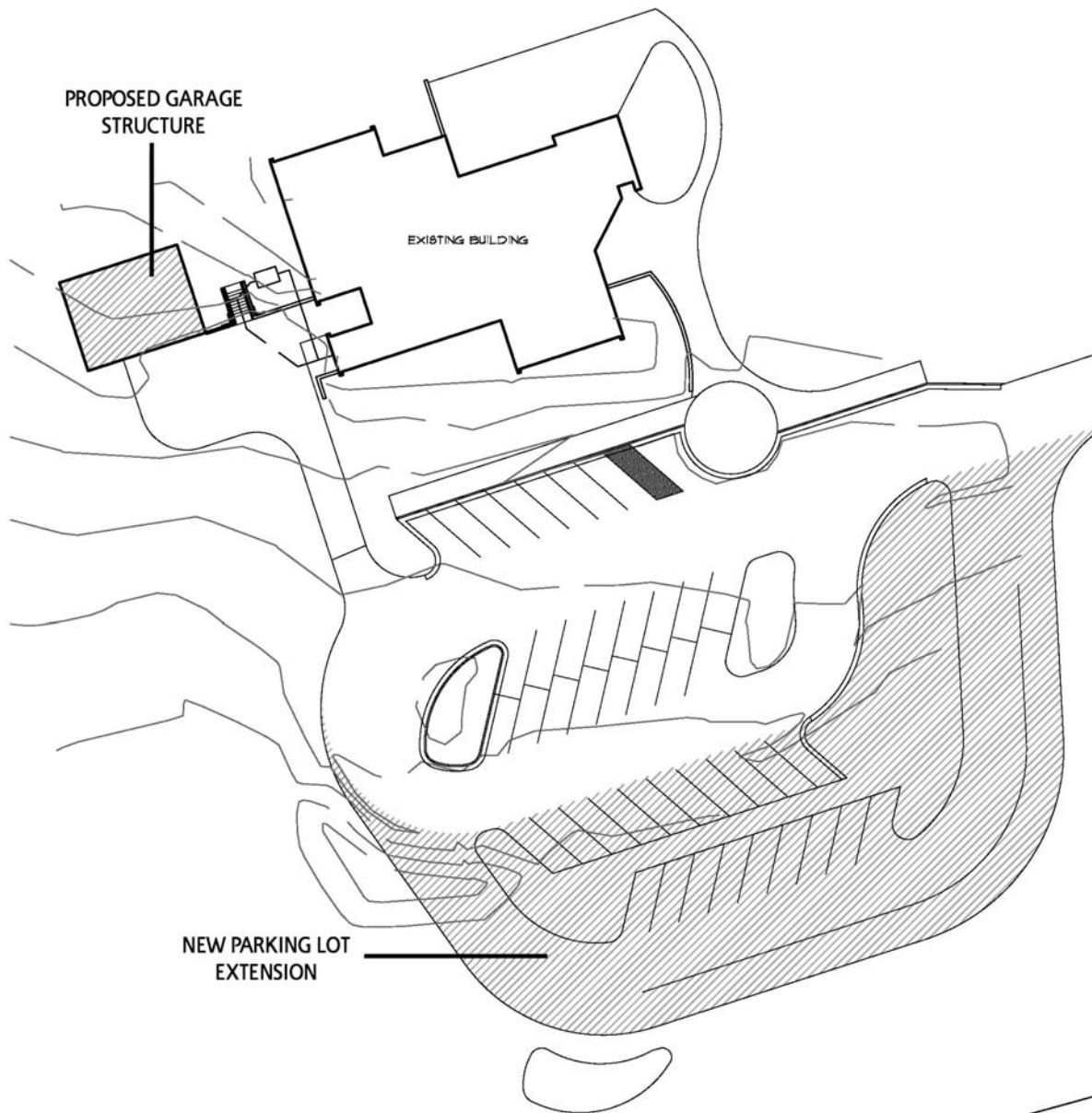
7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

Land Type	Acres	Land Type	Acres
a) Developed		d) Floodplain	0
• Residential	0	(e) Productive	
• Industrial	0	• Irrigated cropland	0
b) Open Space/Recreation	<b>.60</b>	• Dry cropland	0
c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	0	• Forestry	0
		• Rangeland	0
		• Other	0

8. Map of Project Area:



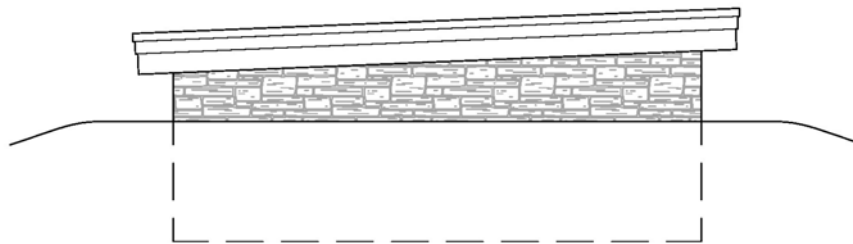
9. Proposed Site Plan:



10. Proposed Garage Structure Elevations:



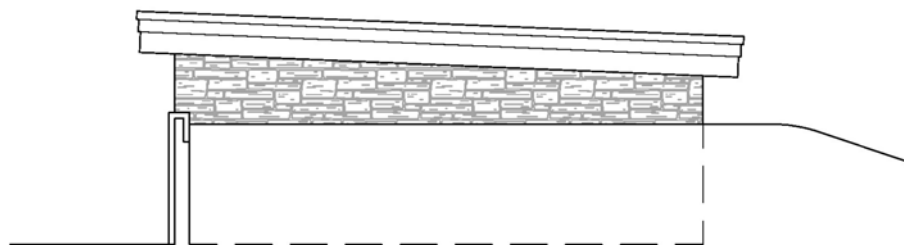
**1 SOUTH ELEVATION**  
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



**2 WEST ELEVATION**  
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



**3 NORTH ELEVATION**  
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



**4 EAST ELEVATION**  
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

**11. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

**(a) Permits:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
Montana Dept. of Labor & Industry Building Code Bureau	Building Permit	Pending

**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	\$175,000

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Resource Compliance

**12. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:**

The 1,428 Ulm Pishkun State Park encompasses one of the largest prehistoric bison kill sites in the United States. For over 600 years, Indians stampeded buffalo over the mile-long cliff. Now, the top of the jump provides panoramic views of the Rocky Mountain Front, the Missouri River Valley, and the buttes and grasslands that characterize this High Plains setting. Visitor facilities in this day use park include a visitor center and interpretive trail.

This project would improve the infrastructure at Ulm Pishkun State Park by constructing a 1,200 square foot maintenance garage and expanding the visitor center parking area by 16,500 square feet. The total amount of land affected by these improvements would be approximately .60 acres.

The maintenance garage would provide much needed workspace for park maintenance projects and storage space for vehicles, tools, equipment and supplies. An adequate maintenance work area and storage facility does not currently exist at Ulm Pishkun State Park.

The garage would be detached from and located approximately 37 feet west of the visitor center. The design would include the following specifications:

- 1,200 square feet
- Two open vehicle stalls and one enclosed, heated storage room
- Single story with maximum height of the building at 12 feet on the front
- Flat roof with a waterproof membrane and sod cover
- Two single vehicle overhead garage doors and one walk-in man door
- Concrete foundation and slab floor

- 2" x 6" framed walls with hardi-plank siding on front (south) side
- Natural stone veneer on all sides

The proposed garage building elevations are illustrated on page 6.

The garage would be built into the slope with earthen berm landscaping on the north, south, and west elevations. This design would result in a maximum height of the structure above the surrounding prairie of 5 feet. The garage would have a flat roof with a ½ inch per foot slope for drainage. The roof would be covered with a sod forming native grass seed mix.

The combination of the earthen berm landscaping and sod roof is intended to disguise the structure and allow it to blend into the surrounding prairie landscape. This is an important means of mitigating impacts upon the panoramic view shed from the top of the buffalo jump.

The expanded parking area would be adjacent to and south by southeast of the existing visitor center parking area. It would provide much needed parking spaces for approximately 25 additional standard sized motor vehicles and 5 additional buses or large recreational vehicles.

At present, large events typically result in inadequate parking, resulting in the need to establish overflow parking in the grassland field directly east of the parking lot. Use of the field has been problematic during wet weather, as the clay soils become extremely muddy and rutted when subjected to vehicles and/or pedestrian traffic. In addition, the current parking area has inadequate turning radiuses for large buses or recreational vehicles. Increasing the turning radiuses and providing additional parallel parking space for buses and larger recreational vehicles will alleviate these problems.

Design of the parking area would include the following specifications:

- New asphalt roadway and parking area covering approximately 16,500 square feet
- Chip seal overlay with earth tone coloration
- Application of appropriate parking stall striping and markings
- Installation of appropriate public use, traffic and directional signs
- Installation of a storm water retaining pond adjacent to the parking area

Throughout the design and construction process FWP intends to make these modifications permanent and the modifications will augment the future uses of the park identified in the draft *Ulm Pishkun State Park Management Plan* (2006).



**13. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Region Four – Great Falls)

Richard Hopkins – Ulm Pishkun State Park Manager

Ray Swartz – Maintenance Supervisor

Roger Semler – Regional Parks Program Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Parks Division - Helena)

Tom Reilly – Assistant Administrator

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Design and Construction Bureau - Helena)

Bardell Mangum – Landscape Architect

Brian Holling - Construction Supervisor

Paul Valle – Design and Construction Bureau Chief

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Damon Murdo – Cultural Records Manager

Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Montana

Victor Bjornberg – Tourism Development Coordinator

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Dale Grossman – District Conservationist

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.**

#### **A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

<b>1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil that would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		X	b.
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

#### **Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

1b. Approximately 26,000 square feet of vegetative cover and 280 cubic yards of underlying sandy, lean clay soils will be disturbed. The perimeter of the garage will be backfilled with approximately 260 cubic yards of fill. All disturbed areas will be shaped for proper drainage and seeded with native, sod forming grasses.

1c. The proposed project would not disturb the unique features of the buffalo jump.

2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c))			X		X	a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. <u>For P-R/D-J projects</u> , will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

2a. During construction there will be temporary and minor impacts to the air quality of the site resulting from dust, exhaust from construction vehicles and equipment. These impacts will be temporary and minimal. If significant dust is generated from the project, water trucks will be utilized to periodically wet down the project area. Exhaust from idling vehicles will be kept to a minimum. No other mitigation is deemed necessary.

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		X	b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

3b. The increased area surfaced with asphalt (16,500 square feet) and the new building (1,200 square feet) will have some effect on storm water runoff. Drainage tile will be installed around the perimeter of the new garage. A small retention pond will be relocated to an area adjacent to the construction area to accommodate storm runoff. The enlarged parking area and the landscaping around the garage will be designed with appropriate slopes and grades to properly divert to the retention pond and diffuse surface runoff. The sod garage roof will also help reduce runoff.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		X	a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

4a. The project will impact approximately 26,000 square feet of native grasses. No trees will be impacted. Installing a sod forming native grass roof over the new garage will restore some of the native grasses lost. All other areas where vegetation is disturbed will be seeded with sod forming native grass.

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X		X	b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X		X	c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

5b. The project area provides habitat for upland game birds and raptors. Some displacement of these species may occur but effects would be minimal due to the small footprint and abundant remaining habitat.

5c. The project area provides habitat for snakes and rodents. Some displacement of these species may occur but effects would be minimal due to the small footprint and abundant remaining habitat.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		X	a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

### Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. Increased noise levels will result during the 90-day construction phase. These noise levels will be minor and temporary and will not require mitigation.

2. <b>LAND USE</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?			X		X	b.
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

2b. The construction site for both the garage and the parking area are currently open grasslands with very low level of scientific or educational importance. The area was surveyed for archeological resources with no significant findings or issues. The Montana State SHPO has been consulted and concurs with this project (see letter from Montana SHPO on page 26). If any archeological resources are discovered during the construction, work will cease until the impacts to cultural resources are assessed.



3. <b><u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				b.
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				c.
d. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X	X		X	d.
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

3a. There is potential for an asphalt spill onto surrounding grasslands during the paving process. Utilizing a professional asphalt and chip seal contractor with oversight from the FWP Design and Construction Bureau will mitigate this risk.

3b. the improved turning radiuses in the parking area will enhance our ability to implement emergency evacuation procedures.

3c. The addition of maintenance garage storage will enhance employee and workplace safety by accommodating storage of chemicals, fuels, and pesticides in the detached garage rather than in the Visitor Center structure.

3d. The paving process will use an oil/asphalt emulsion. It will be professionally applied with oversight from the FWP Design and Construction Bureau.

4. <b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X Positive			e.
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

4e. Access, traffic flow and parking opportunities for visitors at Ulm Pishkun Visitor Center will be enhanced by this project. Appropriate traffic control signage and parking area striping will be installed. Local businesses in the communities of Ulm and Great Falls may indirectly benefit from increased visitation to the park.

5. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X		X	a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources						e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				f.
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

5a. The parking lot expansion may facilitate increased visitation to the park over time, but enhanced services for public safety, security, maintenance, sanitation, waste disposal will be not be required at this time. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks will manage the Park in accordance with the draft Ulm Pishkun State Park Management Plan (2006).

5e. The estimated cost of the site improvements and modifications are \$175,000. Capital Funding is provided by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks with \$100,000 from earned revenue and \$75,000 from Highway Fuel Funds.

5f. On-going operations and maintenance funding is provided FWP - Parks Division. There is currently a sufficient budget in the Ulm Pishkun State Park budget to provide for these modest improvements.

6. <b><u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		X	a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X		X	c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

6a. Construction of the maintenance garage will occur on native grassland that currently provides open space. The construction area is visible from view sheds within the park, particularly from the scenic vista at the top of the Buffalo Jump. Intrusions to this view shed will be mitigated by installing sod forming native grass over the roof of the garage and earthen berm landscaping around the perimeter of the garage. Construction of the 16,500 square foot expanded parking area will also occur on native grassland that currently provides open space. This parking lot may also impact the view shed from the top of the jump. Applying an earth toned chip seal covering to the asphalt surface will mitigate intrusions to the view shed.

6c. The quality and quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities will be enhanced by expansion of the existing parking area. A copy of Travel Montana's Tourism Report supporting this project is attached in Appendix 2 (page 27-28).

<b>7. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- a. The construction area has been surveyed for archeological resources with no significant findings or issues. The Montana SHPO has been consulted and concurs with the project. Should any cultural resources be discovered during construction, the project will cease until the impacts to cultural resources can be properly assessed. See consultation letter from Montana SHPO in Appendix 1, page 26.

## C. SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

1. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X		X	a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if, they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. *** <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. **** <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , list any federal or state permits required.			X		X	g.

### Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The overall environmental and social impacts due to this project are low. Any changes to the park will be beneficial to the long-term use and enjoyment of the public. The new maintenance garage will greatly enhance FWP's capacity to conduct maintenance operations and properly secure vehicles, equipment and supplies. The department has carefully considered means of mitigating visual impacts while improving maintenance capabilities and visitor service

1g. This project would require a building permit from the Building Code Bureau of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED**

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

### **A. No Action Alternative:**

The expanded parking area and maintenance garage would not be constructed. Overflow parking would continue to utilize the grassland area south of the existing parking lot. Impacts to the grassland field would continue during wet and muddy conditions as well as inconvenience to the public who would have to park and walk through clay soils the consistency of gumbo.

Failure to construct the maintenance garage would result in a lack of adequate storage and security for park vehicles, equipment, supplies and materials and would eliminate our ability to perform maintenance projects in an indoor workshop environment.

### **B. Preferred Project as Proposed:**

An expanded parking area and 1,200 square foot maintenance garage would be constructed in the vicinity of the existing parking lot and visitor center. The increased parking capacity would accommodate increasing visitation and large crowds during special events. Parking capacity for large recreational vehicles and/or buses would be increased. The maintenance garage would allow for proper storage and security of vehicles, equipment, supplies and materials and would enhance maintenance operations by providing an indoor, workshop area.

### **C. Alternative # 1: Garage Construction Only; Do Not Expand Parking Area.**

The maintenance garage would be constructed but the expanded parking area would be eliminated from the project. Overflow parking would continue to occur in the grassland field adjacent to the existing parking lot. Failure to provide expanded parking would result in impacts to the grassland field during wet and muddy conditions as well as inconvenience to the public who would have to park and walk through clay soils the consistency of gumbo. Parking for large recreational vehicles and buses would remain very limited.

### **Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

Specific mitigation measures are outlined in the Environmental Review checklist (Part II). State contracts require use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and contractor accountability. FWP will oversee the construction project and construction will be limited to the immediate area identified in this EA.

### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

The improvements proposed at Ulm Pishkun State Park will enhance the public's ability to visit the park and participate in special events. The expanded parking area is needed to facilitate anticipated increases in visitation as well as to accommodate overflow-parking needs that currently exist.

The maintenance garage facility will enhance our staff's ability to perform routine and cyclic maintenance on the visitor center as well as park trails and grounds. It will also allow the staff to properly store and secure vehicles, equipment, supplies and materials.

The site improvements associated with this proposal are consistent with the Ulm Pishkun State Park Management Plan (2006) and will leave a lasting legacy for future visitors to enjoy.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated to native species, water resources, unique landforms, or scenic view shed. All of the minor impacts identified in the Environmental Review checklists (Part II) can be mitigated.

### **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

With no anticipated public opposition or significant impacts to the environment an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

- 2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

This project is consistent with the goals and objectives stated in the draft Ulm Pishkun State Park Management Plan. The facilities and services section of the draft management plan (page 42) includes the following specific recommended actions that are consistent with this project:

- 1) "Develop a storage and work-shop facility for maintenance equipment and repair."
- 2) "Increase parking capacity to accommodate larger crowds during special events. Engineer and design the parking area in a manner that does not detract from the view shed at the top of the jump. Consider matching surface to local soil colors."



The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: Great Falls Tribune, *Helena Independent Record*, and the *Cascade Courier*;
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.state.mt.us>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners, the All Nations Pishkun Association, and other interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts, most of which can be mitigated.

#### **4. Duration of comment period.**

This EA will have a 30-day comment period starting January 30, 2006 and continuing through February 28, 2006. All comments must be postmarked or received before 5:00 pm February 28, 2006.

Comments may be submitted by mail to:

**Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Ulm Pishkun Construction Projects EA  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls MT 59405**

Or comments may be submitted by E-mail to: **[rsemler@mt.gov](mailto:rsemler@mt.gov)**

- 4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**  
**Roger Semler  
Regional Parks Manager  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls MT 59405  
(406) 454-5859**

## Appendix 1: Consultation Letter from State Historic Preservation Office:



### MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

225 North Roberts ♦ P.O. Box 201201 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1201  
♦ (406) 444-2694 ♦ FAX (406) 444-2696 ♦ [www.montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org) ♦

January 11, 2006

Paul Valle  
FWP

RECEIVED

JAN 12 2006

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION  
DEPT. OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

RE: ULM PISHKUN PARKING LOT EXPANSION AND STORAGE BUILDING.  
SHPO Project #: 2006011005

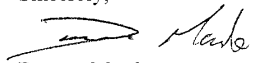
Dear Mr. Valle:

I have conducted a cultural resource file search for the above-cited project located in Section 19, T20N R2E. According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales. There has been one previously conducted cultural resource inventory conducted in the area.

We feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. We, therefore, feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated. Thank you for consulting with us.

If you have any further questions or comments you may contact me at (406) 444-7767 or by e-mail at [dmurdo@mt.gov](mailto:dmurdo@mt.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Damon Murdo  
Cultural Records Manager

File: FWP/PARKS/2006



STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE ♦ 1410 8<sup>th</sup> Ave ♦ P.O. Box 201202 ♦ Helena, MT 59620-1202  
♦ (406) 444-7715 ♦ FAX (406) 444-6575

## **Appendix 2: Tourism Report from Travel Montana**

### **TOURISM REPORT MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks have initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator  
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce  
PO Box 200533  
1424 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

**Project Name:** Ulm Pishkun State Park Construction Projects

**Project Description:**

This project would improve the infrastructure at Ulm Pishkun State Park by constructing a 1,200 square foot maintenance garage and expanding the visitor center parking area by 16,500 square feet. The total amount of land affected by these improvements would be approximately .60 acres.

The maintenance garage would provide much needed workspace for park maintenance projects and storage space for vehicles, tools, equipment and supplies. An adequate maintenance work and storage facility does not currently exist at Ulm Pishkun State Park.

The expanded parking area would be adjacent to and south by southeast of the existing visitor center parking area. It would provide much needed parking spaces for approximately 25 additional standard sized motor vehicles and 5 additional buses or large recreational vehicles.

At present, inadequate parking is available for large events, resulting in the need to establish overflow parking in the grassland field directly east of the parking lot. Use of the field has been problematic during wet weather, as the clay soils become extremely muddy and rutted when subjected to vehicles and/or pedestrian traffic. In addition, the current parking area has inadequate turning radiuses for large buses or recreational vehicles. Increasing the turning radiuses and providing additional parallel parking space for buses and larger recreational vehicles will alleviate these problems.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?  
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

As described, the parking area expansion would improve visitor access, parking and movement in and out of the parking area, particularly the larger bus and RV vehicles. The maintenance building would benefit the operations and maintenance of the facility.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?  
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

**As described, the proposed projects would improve the quality of the recreation/tourism opportunities at Ulm Pishkun State Park's Visitor Center by making access and parking easier along with providing more space for larger vehicles to move within in the parking area. The number of parking spaces would be expanded which would provide more access for more visitor at the park facility.**

Signature Victor A. Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, Travel Montana  
Date January 24, 2006

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